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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3772nd meeting of the Security Council, held on 25 April 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Croatia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 14 April 1997 (S/1997/311) concerning the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka and expresses its disappointment at the general lack of improvement in the situation in Prevlaka.

"The Security Council is concerned by the assessment of the Secretary-General that, while the situation generally has been stable, several developments have led to an increase in tension in the area. The Council is particularly concerned by the descriptions in the report of continuing violations of the demilitarization regime, including movements of heavy weapons and of special police of the Republic of Croatia, and the entry by a navy missile boat of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the demilitarized zone, in disregard of the concerns and requests previously expressed by the Council.

"The Security Council calls upon the parties to refrain from provocative actions of all kinds, to cease violations of the demilitarized zone and to cooperate fully with the United Nations military observers.

"The Security Council also notes the observations in the report of the Secretary-General about the lack of any progress towards adopting the practical options proposed to the parties by the United Nations military observers in May 1996, as referred to in the report of the Secretary-General of 31 December 1996 (S/1996/1075), to improve the safety and security of the area. The Council reiterates its call upon both parties to adopt these practical options with a view to their early implementation, to remove landmines from areas patrolled by the military observers, and to stop their interference with the freedom of movement of the military observers and with the implementation of the mandate of the observers.

"The Security Council calls upon the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to resolve the disputed issue of Prevlaka through bilateral negotiations pursuant to the Agreement on Normalization of Relations, signed by them in Belgrade on 23 August 1996, and in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and good neighbourly relations.

"The Security Council emphasizes its confidence in and support for the work of the United Nations military observers. It expresses its appreciation to the military observers and to the Member States who have provided personnel and other forms of support.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."